

Hispanic Studies by the National Park Service in the Southeast and Caribbean

The National Park Service has traditionally had a strong program of interpretation of the Spanish colonial period in the Southeast, through the 1935 Historic Sites Act. This Act allowed the Park Service to undertake theme studies to identify and designate nationally significant properties as National Historic Landmarks (NHLs). This Act provided for the incorporation of NHLs into the park system to interpret the history of the United States, and also gave the service the opportunity to assist in the preservation of NHLs through cooperative agreements.

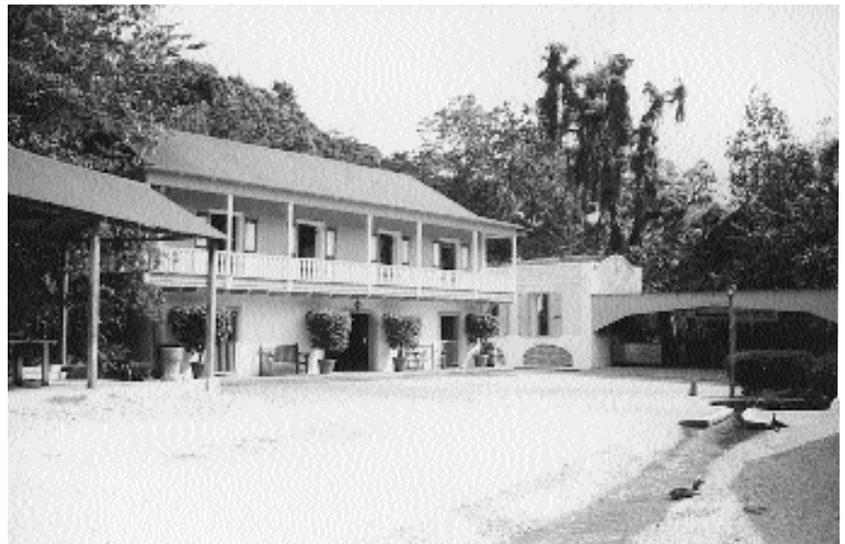
Starting in the 1930s a number of nationally significant historic sites associated with the theme of Spanish colonial Exploration and Settlement were identified for possible inclusion in the national park system. The first cultural properties incorporated as a park unit by transfer from the War Department, was the late-17th-century masonry Castillo de San Marcos, obtained in 1933; and the 18th-century masonry Fort Matanzas, which had protected Spanish colonial St. Augustine, Florida. This was followed up the next year with the creation of Fort Frederica National Monument, in Georgia, a significant early-18th-century English town and fort complex that figured prominently in the Anglo-Spanish struggle for control of the Southeast.

Following World War II, the National Park Service continued to add areas to the system which interpreted the early Spanish exploration and settlement of the Southeast and Caribbean by the acquisition of De Soto National Memorial, Florida (1948), and San Juan National Historic Site, Puerto Rico (1949). The service also acquired significant French colonial areas in the Southeast which interpreted the colonial dynastic struggles of

Spain and France for this area, such as Fort Carolina National Memorial, Florida (1950), and Arkansas Post National Monument (1960).

At the same time as these last properties were being added as park units, the Historic Sites Survey program of the National Park Service was undertaking a series of Spanish colonial nationwide theme studies to identify nationally signifi-

The plantation house of Hacienda Buena Vista, a mid-19th-century coffee plantation. Restored with aid of HAER research, the property is being studied for NHL status.



cant properties for designation as National Historic Landmarks (NHLs) as their contribution to the Mission 66 Program.* This work identified and designated the following Spanish colonial or associated southeastern properties as NHLs—Apalachicola Fort Site, Alabama; Parkin Indian Mound, Arkansas; British Fort, Cathedral of St. Augustine, Fort San Carlos de Barrancas, Fort San Marcos de Apalache, Gonzalez-Alvarez House, Llambias House, Plaza Ferdinand VII, Safety Harbor Site, St. Augustine Town Plan Historic District, and San Luis de Apalachee, Florida; St.

*Mission 66 was a 10-year program to upgrade facilities, staffing, and resource management throughout the System by the 50th anniversary of the NPS in 1966. Dozens of park visitor centers, hundreds of employee residences, and the Mather and Albright employee training centers at Harpers Ferry and the Grand Canyon are among the program's enduring legacies.

Casa Cautiño, in Guayama, Puerto Rico. This building was the headquarters for General Fred Grant during the occupation of the island in the Spanish American War in August of 1898. Casa Cautiño is part of a proposed NHL. Photo by the author.



Catherine's Island, Georgia; The Cabildo, Fort St. Philip, Homeplace Plantation House, Jackson Square, Lafitte's Blacksmith Shop, Madame John's Legacy, and The Presbytere, Louisiana; La Fortalez, Puerto Rico; and the Columbus Landing Site in the United States Virgin Islands.

Only two of the NHL properties noted above (Fort San Carlos de Barrancas and the Columbus Landing Site) have become park units since their designation in the early 1960s. The rest are owned by state and local government agencies, private preservation groups, and individuals involved in the preservation of these properties, and many are open to the public. However, throughout the 1960s and 1970s, the NHL programs went into a decline and many deserving nationally significant properties were not recognized.

In the mid-1980s, the National Register Programs Division of the Southeast Region, in Atlanta, revived the NHL program in the southeastern and Caribbean area by undertaking special studies of Los Adaes, an 18th-century Spanish colonial town and presidio site, in northwest Louisiana, and the Menard-Hodges Site, a 17th-

century French colonial trading post, in southeast Arkansas. These were designated by the Secretary of the Interior as NHLs in 1986 and 1989, respectively. The site of Los Adaes has recently been acquired by the State Parks of Louisiana for future interpretation and the Menard-Hodges Site was acquired for preservation by the Archaeological Conservancy.

The Atlanta National Register Programs Division, as the only field office then actively researching and designating properties as NHLs,

was requested by the Chief Historian of the NPS to study two southwestern Arizona Spanish colonial mission sites—Guevavi and Calabazas—as potential NHLs. Both sites were designated as NHLs in 1990 and by 1997 both mission sites were added to Tumacácori National Monument as outliers.

At this point it was decided to develop a sound comparative approach to the development of future NHLs in the Southeast. The National Register Programs Division decided to undertake a Historic Sites Thematic NHL Study for historic Native American and colonial properties in the southeastern states and Caribbean possessions. The time frame was set at c. A.D. 1500 to 1830. Although for Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, the end time frame was the end of the colonial period, or 1898 and 1917, respectively.

As of 1997, a number of Native American sites with historical associations with the Spanish have been designated, such as Yuchi Town Site, Alabama (1996); Eaker Site, Arkansas (1996); Dancing Rabbit Creek Treaty Site, Mississippi (1996); the Caguana Site, Puerto Rico (1994); and the Chucalissa Site, Tennessee (1994). Similarly, a number of historic Spanish colonial sites, such as the Fort Mose Site—the first free Black town in the United States—in Florida (1994); the Caparra Site—the 1508–1521 town site of Juan Ponce de Leon—in Puerto Rico (1994) were designated as NHLs through this historic sites theme study.

Future plans of the National Register Programs call for the revision of older

Bombardment of San Juan, Puerto Rico by Admiral Sampson. May 12, 1898.



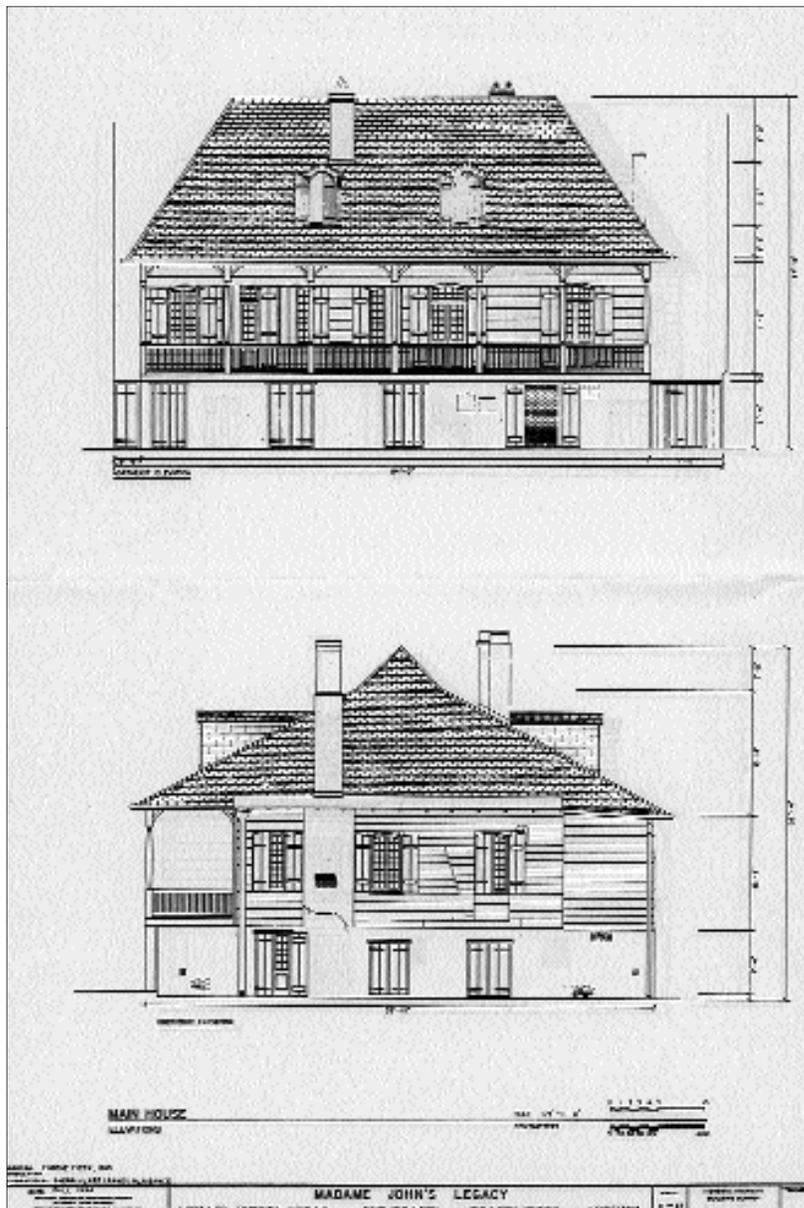
Two HABS drawings of Madame John's Legacy, a colonial building in New Orleans, LA.

NHLs, such as the Columbus Landing Site, in the Virgin Islands, to include more detail on the effect of the Columbian encounter on Native Americans in the Caribbean. It is envisioned that this document can be used as an interpretive plan by the National Park Service on St. Croix. This office has also completed a field re-survey of St. Augustine Historic District NHL. This work to be incorporated into a revision of the nomination has identified a number of new Spanish colonial buildings and sites not noted in the original nomination.

New studies currently under development are a Multiple Property nomination for cultural resources associated with the theme of Spanish-American War Sites in Puerto Rico; the 16th-century Spanish colonial town site of Santa Elena, South Carolina; a Multiple Property nomination for Spanish colonial mission sites in Florida; a 19th-century Spanish colonial coffee plantation—Hacienda Buena Vista—in Puerto Rico; a Multiple Property nomination for 16th-century Calusa Indian mound sites in Florida; and a study of the First Lines of Defense of San Juan, Puerto Rico, where the Spanish defeat a British force in 1797 in one of the few Napoleonic battles to take place on American soil.

The identification, application of NHL criteria, and nomination of new NHLs or the revision of existing NHLs, should not, however, be seen as the end product. This documentation is assembled by the National Register Programs Division in conjunction with State Historic Preservation Officers, graduate students from preservation departments, professional historians, archeologists, architectural historians, and private individuals, and federal, state, and local agencies with one ultimate goal—preservation.

National Historic Landmark designation allows the National Park Service—through the 1935 Historic Sites Act—to get actively involved in working with diverse owners to achieve preserva-



tion solutions for these nationally significant properties. As noted above, the Service has preserved a number of these Hispanic NHLs in the Southeast and Caribbean by adding them to the national park system. It is, however, not practical to assume that the Service will do this for all NHLs.

Using private foundations and other government agencies, the National Register Programs Division have been instrumental in the cooperative preservation of a number of these NHLs, either through acquisition and restoration for interpretation, or setting the historic areas aside as research areas for the future. It is this goal that the Atlanta office hopes to foster for the future.

Mark Barnes is Senior Archeologist, National Register Programs Division, NPS, Atlanta.